

**Keynote address: 'A Climate of Peace'**

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*Unprecedented challenges require  
unprecedented solutions".  
Amin Maalouf*

This is a great celebration: the International Peace Bureau, born in Bern in 1891, was awarded with the Nobel Peace Prize in 1910. Today, the IPB is a global network of peacemaking throughout the world, with more than 320 member organizations in 70 countries.

The celebration takes place in Oslo, the city of peace, and in the Nobel Peace Centre. These are the best choices that could be done.

Tirelessly working for a world mobilization –with the academic, scientific, intellectual and art communities in the forefront- to make feasible the transition from force to word, through sustainable disarmament and sustainable development, to create a *climate of peace*. Congratulations and the best expectations because, before

long, for the first time in history, a climate of peace can now emerge from a secular climate of war.

We are living fascinating times because change is at present feasible. “We, the peoples...” will be able, as foreseen with impressive farsightedness in the Charter of the United Nations, of building peace ourselves, at home, at the school, at the work place, in the town, in the world at large.

During centuries in a men-driven society, a culture of imposition and confrontation has prevailed: “*Si vis pacem para bellum*”, if you wish peace, prepare war. And war has been prepared, and peace has been only a pause between two conflicts, for the benefit of the arm producers, who have been always in favour of the readiness for war.

“We, the peoples” were completely absent of the power scenarios. Particularly, the women. Living in a very restricted context both from the territorial and intellectual point of view, unable to know what was happening in the rest of the world, citizenship was obedient and silent, giving their own life, completely submitted to the requirements of those who had in their hands the reins of the common destiny.

*Now, for the first time, the possibility of the transition from a culture of violence and war to a culture of dialogue, conciliation and peace exists, because global consciousness is progressively build up; more women are involved in the decision-making and through the modern technology of communication a non-presential participation can take place. These are the reasons why, I hope in the next few*

*years the crucial transition from force to word, from the armed hand to an open one, will take place.*

After the end of the “hot” war of the twenty century, the great powers of the world realized that the only possibility to change radically the course of history was to be all the countries together.

President Woodrow Wilson arrived to Brest at the end of 1918 with the *Covenant* for “permanent peace” in the world. And the Society of Nations, the League of Nations was born.

But soon, the armament manufacturers persuaded the winners that they should be prepared for war if they really were wishing peace. And then, you know what happened: after the “crack” of 1929, nationalistic and xenophobic feelings widespread (we must be now careful at this respect, after the recent “crack” of the economy), and “*Deustschland über alles*” was in the lips and also in the hearts of many initiators of the Nazi and Fascist movements, while the war machinery was put in full motion and the diplomacy of the Society of Nations was fading out.

And a horrible World War started in 1939. Massive annihilation, genocide, holocaust. To the conflict in Europe the fanaticism and ambition Japanese brought the war to the Pacific.

President Roosevelt conceived a United Nations System able to deal with security, labour, food, health, education, science and culture, development, children, environment... *all of them driven by the “peoples”* trying to build a world democracy synergy, guided by

the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted in December of 1948 based, as enshrined in the UNESCO's Constitution Preamble, in the *equal dignity of all human beings*.

A key word, essential for the redressment of the situation at global scale: *was sharing, better sharing*. This is why cooperation for development was immediately adopted at the forefront of the UN action: integral (not only economic but social); endogenous (the most prosperous countries should give the less developed ones the 0,7% of the GNP); sustainable (this important dimension of development was established by the Commission chaired by the Prime Minister of Norway, Gro Harlem Brundtland).

And, finally, at the end of the 80's was agreed that *development should be human*, according to the proposal made by the Deputy Administrator of UNICEF, Richard Jolly, in his book "Development with a Human Face".

However, after few years, no peoples but States; no aid but loans; no cooperation but exploitation.... and the superpower arms race, with the USSR widening the scope of its dictatorship and the United States, as well, with their struggle against communists, imposing unbelievable authoritarian rulers in Latin America (the "Córdoba" operation is really a shame) and in other parts of the world... with the exception of China (perhaps, this small and unpopulated country was forgotten or left aside by those brilliant strategists).

However, the worst happened at the beginning of the 80's, with the alliance of President Reagan and the Prime Minister of the United

Kingdom, Margareth Thatcher, because they substituted the values and democratic principles by the market laws to drive the world economy. Market instead of social justice. And also aggressive stepwise actions to weaken the UN System. They step down from UNESCO and organized the G-6, a plutocratic group of the richest countries of the world. Immediately afterwards, Canada was added and then was the G-7. Some years later Russia joined as well and was the G-8... and then, recently, this group was widened to 20 members, the G-20. This has been, as the basis of the so called "globalization", the asymmetrical form of governance, against the Roosevelt design, that led the world to the present situation in which, *in a very short and terrible balance, more than 4 billion dollars in military and armament daily expenditures while more than 60,000 persons die of hunger and extreme poverty.*

And all this is because at the end of the Cold War in 1989, when so many expectations could be taken into account (the wall of Berlin collapsed and the USSR, because of Mikhail Gorbachev's exceptional ability, led to the Commonwealth of Independent States... and the terrible *apartheid* in South Africa was disappearing, because of the wisdom of Nelson Mandela.. and processes of peace were ending conflict situations in El Salvador, Guatemala, Mozambique...). Yes, the end of the Cold War was a momentum full of hope in which we were waiting for the promised "peace dividends"...

But the "globalizers" did not reinforce the United Nations; did not favour a global sustainable development. On the contrary, expanded economic domination and decided to act completely out of the

Security Council and the International Court of Justice decisions as in the case of the invasion of Kosovo in 1999, and the building of new walls in different parts of the world... They were so enthusiastic about the good results that apparently were being obtained from the globalization process of market economy, that the 11<sup>th</sup> of May 1996, the President of United States said that a market democracy and a market society could also be envisaged!

Nevertheless, during the 90's, the United Nations was tirelessly producing good guidance for the world as a whole: in 1990, the World Education for All throughout Life Congress; in 1992, in Rio de Janeiro, the Agenda 21 to cope with the progressive environmental damage; in 1993, the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, after very important meeting in Montreal, on Education in Human Rights and Democracy; in 1994, in Barcelona, the Interreligious Meeting for a Culture of Peace, with 19 religions represented at the highest level; in 1995, in the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United Nations, the important Summit on Social Development held in Copenhagen, with the adoption of commitments for action, the World Conference in Beijing on Woman and Development, and the Declaration on Tolerance; in 1997, the Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights; in 1999, the Declaration and Plan of Action on a Culture of Peace... and I would like also to mention the excellent document that represents the Earth Charter, published in the year 2000.

It was in this year that the heads of State and Government met in the United Nations to declare their willingness of action to reach the Objectives of the Millennium. But there was no money. No money

against poverty, AIDS and infant – maternal diseases... No money to make water and food available to all the human beings around the world. No money but for arms, to be well prepared for war.

In 2001, the terrible attack of Al Qaeda to the United States.

And, as an expected reaction of retaliation, the Afghanistan conflict. And afterwards, completely unexpected and based on lies with clear geostrategic and economic objectives, President Bush, without the permission of the Security Council -because the inspection leaded by a man of the stature of Hans Blix has not found the arsenals of massive destruction arms, the invasion of Iraq- decided after the unbelievable “summit” of the Azores Islands, with George Bush, Tony Blair and José María Aznar leading the “coalition”... Billions of dollars again for military expenditures and armament... while extreme poverty was widening to reach the awful present situation.

*In 2005, in the Objectives of the Millennium +5 Summit, the Heads of State and Government, unanimously decided that the Declaration for a Culture of Peace as well as the Plan of Action for the Dialogue among Civilizations should be rapidly implemented, and welcomed the initiative of Alliance of Civilizations made by the Prime Minister of Spain at the UN.*

Afterwards, nothing was done. The globalization was going on widening the gap between the haves and have not and with the immense problems resulting from the delocalization of production towards the East, with “greed and irresponsibility”, utilizing the same words of President Obama, was leading to the incoherent situation

of China being the communist country richest of the world, the capitalist -communist country, expanding its influence in Latin America and Africa and the Eastern countries.

In 2008, the crack of the financial world system, mainly produced by the *hedge funds* of the United States... and Europe, instead of leading the solutions, went to visit President Bush –when Obama was already elected!- in Camp David, putting in his hands the reins to overcome the multiple crisis (financial, environmental, democratic, political, ethical). After the meeting of Sarkozy and Durao Barroso with Bush, they reacted as follows: “We need a new international economic order” (Durao Barroso); “Nous avons besoin d’un nouveau capitalisme” (President Sarkozy); and “The solution is free trade, free market, free economy” (President George Bush). And instead of the United Nations, a G-20 enlarged met in Washington and the decision was to “rescue” the financial institutions with public money in immense amounts: more than 700 billion dollars in the United States and more than 400 billion dollars in the European Union. The financial institutions responsible for the crisis were rescued and the State become indebted and should immediately “adjust” their budgets... The G-20 claimed for immediate regulation and disappearance of the tax heavens in order to avoid in the future similar severe economic disasters...

Today, the tax heavens are as they were. The climate change is going on without important measures to redress it; the traffic of all kinds (arms, drugs, capitals, persons...) is taking place in the supranational space in complete impunity... Production and selling of expensive armament is increasing (I must emphasize that this



kind of armament has not been utilized from the Vietnam war because of the complete change of the modalities of confrontation)... Therefore we are in an economy of speculation and war, at the same time that we are completely unprepared to reduce the impact of nature or man made catastrophes. The most powerful country of the world is unable to cope with situations of flooding as in the case of Katrina hurricane, or earthquakes, or fires...

*As I have said before, in this dawn of a new century and millennium, we can be hopeful because for the first time in history radical changes are feasible. I emphasized that the widening influence of woman in the decision making, the global consciousness and concern, and the modern technology of communication, provide us with the possibility of mobilization of the peoples. Yes, now is possible to mobilize the peoples. To make a very big transition from submitted to active citizens. Citizens that are not spectators anymore, that are not silent anymore, that are not living under fear anymore. In the Preamble of the Declaration of Human Rights it is said that the practice of the human rights is to free humanity "from fear"... and in the next paragraph it is said that, if human rights are not implemented, human beings can be "compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion".*

Now it is time for action. The time of resignation is over. The transition from a culture of war to a culture of peace and non-violence can be a reality in a very short period of time. From imposition to dialogue, from force to word.

*We must overcome the immense mediatic power that concentrates the information and news in very few hands over the world. And we must be able to see the invisibles.* The news, as a view of what is happening in the world but only taking into account the events that are “news”, this means unusual, extraordinary. And we must be able to see the real life, to see the invisibles. As Professor Bernard Lawn said in 1985 when receiving the Nobel Peace Award, “only in the extent that we are able to see the invisibles we will be able to do the impossibles”.

*Now, to reach peace, the transition from an economy of war to an economy of global sustainable human development; the transition from imposition and domination to dialogue, conciliation and alliance... are possible.*

Today, in his address to the General Assembly of the United Nations, President Obama has adopted a very firm position in favour of the United Nations reinforcement, and proposes to solve the Iran conflict through diplomacy, urging the acceleration of the peace process between Israel and Palestine.

Yes, a “new beginning”, as President Obama said in his speech in Cairo in June 2009, can start, because the human beings are able to invent their future. *The humans are able to create and, therefore, they can face all kinds of challenges.*

*Peace is in our hands. It is in our hands to firmly promote everyday, with our behaviour, a culture of peace, of understanding, of*

*conciliation. It is in our hands to create a climate of peace and non-violence.*

Now we can. And we will not be witness only. We have been too silent too often. We will not be anymore.

We have now the possibility of non presential participation. And we will take advantage of this.

*The time of submission and resignation are over.*

Yes, as I said when I started, peace will emerge and grow in a *climate of peace.*

And the culture of violence and war will fade out forever.

Peace, shalom, salam.

Federico Mayor  
September 2010.